

The following proposal was made at The Foundations Conference in NYC Dec 19, 2019. This agreement is not an absolute promise, but a friendly, harmonious joint resolution of united prayer that shall begin January 2020 and continue every week for a total of 52 weeks.

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF UNITED PRAYER
FOR THE
REVIVAL OF RELIGION
AND THE
ADVANCEMENT OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM ON EARTH.

www.sermonaudio.com/unitedprayer

Synopsis.

This resolution is based on *An Humble Attempt*, originally put forward by Jonathan Edwards in 1748. Its design is to encourage God's people in the duty of united extraordinary prayer; setting aside some time every Saturday, privately or publicly, to pray for the revival of His church and the advancement of Christ's kingdom in our homes, in our churches, in our nation, and in the world.

Motivation.

We are in a war. We are living in a world sinking under a growing tidal wave of evil. The darkness seems to be getting darker. The winter seems to be getting colder. The family is under relentless attack. Not only are we witnessing the homes in our local churches being ripped apart, but socially, the very definition of *family*, *marriage*, and now even what constitutes a *male* and *female*, the fabric and building blocks of humanity, are all disintegrating. No human weapon can deal with the problem of *sin*. The only power that can deal with this tidal wave of hell on earth is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Eph 6:12

Forefathers.

What can we learn from our forefathers? In 1748, Jonathan Edwards published a little book that may not be as well known to us today, called, *An Humble Attempt To Promote Explicit Agreement & Visible Union Of God's People In Extraordinary Prayer For The Revival Of Religion And The Advancement Of Christ's Kingdom On Earth*. In it, Edwards was putting forward a *proposal*. A proposal for prayer. But not just any prayer. A proposal for *united extraordinary prayer*. On page 33 of *The Case for United Prayer*, we read:

“... taking into consideration the state of God’s church, and of the world of mankind, the providence of God, at such a day, did loudly call upon such as were concerned for the welfare of the Church, to united extraordinary applications to the God of all grace, earnestly praying to Him, that He would appear in His glory, and favour Zion, and manifest His compassion to the world of mankind, by an abundant outpouring of His Holy Spirit on all the churches, and the whole earth, to revive true religion in all parts of Christendom, and to deliver all nations from their great spiritual calamities and miseries, and bless them with the unspeakable benefits of the kingdom of our glorious Redeemer, and fill the whole earth, with His glory.”

In other words, considering the state of the church and of the world, the providence of God is “loudly” calling upon us to make united extraordinary “applications to God” in prayer.

Proposal.

I wish to put forward a proposal for all who share in this burden to set aside a portion of time every Saturday, beginning January 2020, continuing throughout the year, for a total of 52 weeks, privately or publicly, to pray, with focus and purpose, for the revival of His church and the advancement of His kingdom in our homes, in our churches, in our nation, and in the world. It is,

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Why united prayer?

One may ask why *united prayer* is necessary? The following reasons are summarized from Edwards's *An Humble Attempt* and provide strong grounds for attempting such an endeavor.

- **Scripture.**

Edwards makes a case from Zechariah 8:20-22 that “it is a very suitable thing, and well-pleasing to God, for many people, in different parts of the world, by express agreement, to come into a visible union in extraordinary, speedy, fervent, and constant prayer, for those great effusions of the Holy Spirit, which shall bring on that advancement of Christ’s church and kingdom, that God has so often promised shall be in the latter ages of the world.” (p 30)

- **Support.**

When we commit ourselves in agreement with one another, that joint resolution is “a proper guard against negligence and indolence. Such an agreed union will tend to animate and encourage God’s people in the duty proposed; and that participants knowing that a great multitude of their fellow Christians, in so many distant places, are at the same time by agreement engaged in the same holy exercise, will naturally be enlivened in the duty.” (p 36)

- **Scope.**

What is the *scope* of our desire beyond seeing our own families and local churches brought to Christ? It should be our desire to see the glory and knowledge of the Lord fill the *entire earth*, “as the waters cover the sea.” In other words, whose kingdom are we really concerned with? Our kingdom or Christ’s kingdom? If we truly have a concern for Christ’s kingdom to increase to every corner of the earth, then this work cannot be done alone.

Why set a weekly time?

Edwards understood human nature, and, in his wisdom, he reasoned that if a specific and agreed time were not established, it wouldn't happen.

“Those things to which we are too little inclined, through sloth, carnality, or a fullness of our own worldly or private concerns, having no special sessions stated for them, are apt to be forgotten or put off from time to time ... But when we fix on certain seasons, which we resolve, unless extraordinarily hindered, to devote to the duty, it tends to prevent forgetfulness and negligence. The certain returns of the season will naturally refresh the memory.” (p 36)

Edwards further noted that merely agreeing through “loose consent” that prayer for revival and the kingdom is a “fit and proper” thing to do is not enough. No matter how much we approve of something, there must be *joint resolution* to act on that agreement.

“Agreeing on certain times for united extraordinary prayer, is a likely and proper means to promote and maintain such prayer. If there should be only a loose consent to it as a duty, or a thing fit and proper, that Christians should be much in prayer for the revival of religion, without agreeing on particular times, how liable would such a lax agreement be soon forgotten, and that extraordinary prayerfulness, which is fixed to NO certain times, be totally neglected!”

Is this something new?

This proposal may seem on the surface to be a new and novel invention being imposed on God's people. Edwards answers this criticism by stating that far from being a new duty, it is a “reformation of a former negligence.”

“The duty of prayer is no new duty. For many of God's people expressly to agree, as touching something they shall ask in prayer, is no new thing. For God's people to agree on circumstances of time and place for united prayer, according to their own discretion, is no new thing. For many, in different places, to agree to offer up extraordinary prayers to God, at the same time, as a token of their union, is no new thing; but has been commonly practised in the appointment of days of fasting and prayer for special mercies. And if the people of God should engage in the duty of prayer, it is not a new thing, but rather, a reformation of a former negligence.”

Whether one, or whether many.

It matters not if there are few or many in this joint resolution. Edwards once again argues that if we cannot get others to join us in prayer, the duty proposed should not be abandoned completely.

“Let me ask all who sincerely love the interest of real Christianity, notwithstanding any diversity of opinion and former disputes, now to unite, in this affair, with one heart and voice: and let us go speedily to pray before the Lord. There is no need that one should wait for another. If we can get others our neighbours to join with us, this is desirable; but if not, why should we wholly neglect the duty proposed? Why should not we perform it by ourselves, uniting in heart and practice, as far as we are able, with those who in distant places are engaged in that duty at that time?”

A spreading thing.

“Those to whom the motion is made, shall comply with it, the proposal shall take with many, it shall be a prevailing, spreading thing; one shall follow another’s example, one and another shall say, I will go also.” (p 28)

“If it be agreeable to the mind and will of God, that we should comply with the Joint Resolution, by praying for the advance of Christ’s kingdom, in the manner therein proposed, then doubtless it should also lie with us to promote others to join in such prayer, and to render this agreement as extensive as may be.”

Conclusion.

It is my desire to re-issue the same burden that Edwards had and make another humble attempt to promote explicit agreement and visible union of God’s people in extraordinary prayer for the revival of religion and the advancement of Christ’s kingdom on earth.

Andrew Fuller upon reading Edwards’ *An Humble Attempt* stated,

“Let us take encouragement, in the present day of small things, by looking forward, and hoping for better days. Let this be attended with earnest and united prayer to Him by whom Jacob must arise. O brethren, let us pray much for an outpouring of God’s Spirit upon our ministers and churches, and not upon those only of our own connection and denomination, but upon ‘all that In every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.’”

In conclusion, it is,

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If this is also your burden and you would like to join us in this RESOLUTION of UNITED PRAYER every Saturday in 2020 for the revival of His church and advance of His kingdom, let us know at **info@sermonaudio.com** so we can send you a simple reminder each week to aid in “preventing forgetfulness” and to “animate and encourage” all those in agreement of this duty.

Please visit **www.sermonaudio.com/unitedprayer** to see the signatures of all currently participating and to learn more about this effort.

Thank you.



Steven Lee
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